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A
DISCOURSE
Concerning the
CHARACTER
OF
A Man of Genius.

DISCOURSE
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OF
A MAN OF
DISCOURSE
CHARACTER
A POET
A MAN OF
GENIUS
Young Company of Architects

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A

DISCOURSE

Laudendally Concerning the *Poetry*

CHARACTER

O F

A Man of Genius.

By M^r. HEPBURN.

WITH

A POEM

ON THE

Young-Company of *Archers*,

By M^r. BOYD.

*Ingenium cui sit, cui mens diviniore, atque os
Magna sonaturum des Nominis hujus honorem.*

HORAT.

EDINBURGH:

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chard Steele's Head, in the Parliament-Close. MDCCXV.

A
 BIRD
 OF THE
 FOREST





To the Right Honourable,
CHARLES,
Earl of *Lauderdale.*

MY LORD,



It is the ordinary Fault
of *Dedications*, to be
written in such Gene-
ral Terms, that, like
Mr. *Bay's Prologues* in
the *Rehearsal*, One may apply them
to

iv *The Dedication.*

to any Body as well as the *Patron*. Like the *Masks* and *Buskins*, of the old *Tragedians*, they agree indifferently with any *Heroe*. It is enough, he has a grim Aspect, and is larger than the Life.

To avoid this common *Ridicule*, I have done my self the Honour to *Inscribe* this short Discourse to your *Lordship*; being confident that any One, who is not wholly Ignorant of your Character, needs not have Recourse to such *Common-Places*.

I own, *My Lord*, it is none of the least of my Views in this *Dedication*,
by

The Dedication.

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by affixing these Papers to your *Illustrious* Name, to procure them a longer Date than any Thing of Mine could possibly expect or deserve to have. But I am sure, all who have the Honour and Happiness to be of your *Lordship's* Acquaintance, will do Me the Justice to own, that I do not so much, at present, address Myself to a *Man of Quality*, as a *Man of Sense*.

YOUR *Lordship* knows that, as Mr. *Cowley* has it, there is a *Great Vulgar* as well as a *Small*; and the *Lustre* of your *Birth* has not more eminently distinguish'd you from
the

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the *One*, than your *Personal Merit*
has rais'd you above the *Other*.

I am,

MY LORD,

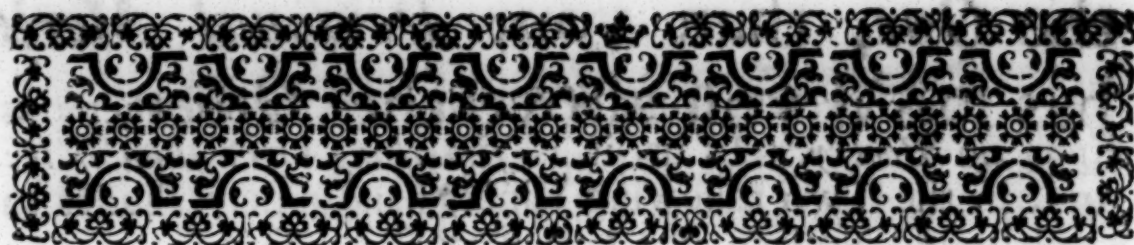
Your Lordship's

Most Obedient,

and most Humble

Servant,

ROBERT HEPBURN.



A
DISCOURSE
Concerning the
CHARACTER
OF
A Man of Genius.



HERE is no Character more generally and more vainly aspir'd to, more frequently mention'd in Conversation, and, I believe, less understood, than that of *a Man of Genius*. Whatever Book a Man happens to be fond of, or the Course of One's Studies leads One, with a blind Admiration, to peruse; to be sure, the Author was *a Man of Genius*. So profusely do we bestow that Reputation on *Pretenders*, which Men of a true *Genius* alone

The Character of

alone deserve, and all Writers so warmly endeavour to attain.

§ I. THE present Duke of *Buckingham*, in his ingenious *Essay on Poetry*, tells us, it is *something more than Wit*: And, in the Two following Lines, handsomely alludes to a celebrated Notion, of a late *English* Physician,

*What Cell, what Cavern is it of the Brain
That does this vast, this mighty Thing contain?*

BUT it is infinitely easier to imagine and conceive this Character, than to find Words to explain it; tho' it is not perhaps so hard a Task to set it in a proper Light, and illustrate it by some Instances of *Men of Genius* among the *Ancients* and *Moderns*.

§ II. THERE have appear'd in the World some Persons of so *vast and comprehensive a Genius*, that, as it is said of *Solomon* in the sacred Writ, *Their Hearts were large as the Sand upon the Sea-shore*; Men of an unbounded Reach of Thought. Such Prodigies of Wit were *Homer*, *Aristotle*, and *Tully* among the *Ancients*; and among the *Moderns*, *Erasmus*, *Grotius*, *Sir Francis Bacon*, and *Sir Isaac Newton*, who lives the *Glory* of this Age, and will be the *Admiration* of Posterity. To this great Man I have last mention'd, I might add some Others of my *Contemporaries*; but, *vivorum ut magna admiratio, ita censura difficilis*: For which Reason I shall pass them over in Silence.

§ III.

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§ III. THERE are Others of a *great*, but more *correct* *Genius*, who have confin'd their Wit and Invention to proper Bounds. Improv'd by Education, they have restrain'd the Exuberancy of Fancy, by the just Force of their Judgment. There is an Air of Politeness, and a *fine Taste*, that shines in all their Writings.

*For none were e'er with Admiration read,
But who, besides their Learning, were Well-bred.*

ROSCOMMON.

§ IV. OF this Sort were, among the *Greeks*, *Thucydides*, *Xenophon*; among the *Romans*, *Virgil*, *Horace*, *Livy*, with all the other Wits of *Augustus's* Court. Nor are the *Moderns* defective in this Particular. *Italy* has given us *Angelus Politianus*, *France* her *Boileau*, *Spain* the admirable *Cervantes*, and the prudent *Gratian*; and our *Island* has produc'd a *Ben: Johnson*, and a *Buchanan*.

§ V. IN order to be a *Man of Genius*, there is requir'd a good Fund of Wit and Sense deriv'd from Nature, and refin'd by a Generous and Polite Education. Such a One ought to Form himself upon the Model of the best Authors; and, according to *Longinus's* Rule for Writing, should propose them to his Imitation, and imagine and represent to himself what *Virgil* or *Horace* would have done in the like Circumstances. By this Means, he might sometimes catch the Flame from them, and make their Thoughts his

own; sometimes surpass them in Loftiness of Sentiments; and his Soul burn with an Ardour equal or superior to that which so forcibly and nobly animated Theirs.

§ VI. HE must, above all Things, take Care to have his Mind thoroughly season'd with the Principles of Virtue and Religion. It is impossible for a Man of Sense and *Genius* to be an *Atheist*; and, if he seriously and impartially considers Things, not to be a *Christian*. The *Wits* and *Libertines* of the last Age, were not like our present *Free-thinkers*: They were hurried into Vice and Irreligion, by the resistless Force and Violence of their Passions; and not by a dull and insipid Vanity of distinguishing themselves from Others, by advancing and maintaining groundless and ridiculous Opinions.

§ VII. I don't know by what Fate it happens, that some Men have the Fortune to be accounted *Wits*, only for Jestling a little out of the common Road, and for endeavouring, in Opposition to all the Reason and Sense of Mankind, to turn into Ridicule those Things which are, in their own Nature, the most sacred and venerable. But as a Man is not infamous for being defam'd; so it is no Disparagement to any Person or Thing, to be laugh'd at, but to deserve to be so. It was a wise Answer of *Dio-genes*, which we find mention'd by *Plutarch*; when some of his Friends told him, That his Enemies were laughing at him; *But I*, reply'd he, *am not* derided.

NOTHING

A Man of Genius.

NOTHING is more easy than for a Person, of a wanton Imagination, to take particular Expressions out of the best Book in the World, and to force upon them a ridiculous Sense: Thus Mr. *Hobbs*, the ingenious Author of very bad Writings, endeavour'd to ridicule *Infusion* and *Inspiration*, by his facetious Terms of *Inpowering* and *Inbreathing*. And the witty Earl of *Rocheſter* us'd to say, 'That the *working of Miracles* was nothing else but the *Art of showing a Trick*. When I mention the Last of these, I can't chuse but regret, that a Person of so large a *Genius*, and of such bright Parts and Abilities, should have been hurried, by an intemperate Sort of Life, into such Extravagancies, as, for several Years, not to be Master of himself: And tho' he liv'd not half the Age of a Man; yet by his Excesses he did not enjoy the Half of those Days wherein he lived. He unhappily perverted those agreeable Talents which God had given him, and meanly prostituted them to Vice and Debauchery; which occasion'd a noble Friend of his to reflect, with a great Deal of Justice, Wit, and Candor, upon his leud Poems, in the following Lines.

*Such nauseous Songs, by a late Author made,
Draw an unwilling Censure on his Shade:
Not that warm Thoughts of the approaching Joy
Can shock the Nicest, or the Chastest cloy.
But obscene Words, too loose to raise Desire,
Like Heaps of Embers, only quench the Fire.*

§ VIII. AT the same Time, it must be allow'd, that a *Man of Genius* may have virtuous Sentiments and Resolutions, tho' he is not able to exert and put them in Execution. As a *Philosopher* professes, by that Name, he is a *Lover of Wisdom*, which yet he does not pretend to have attain'd ; so it sometimes happens, that one is a *Lover of Virtue*, tho', in the Course of his Life, he can hardly be term'd a *virtuous Man*.

§ IX. A *Man of Genius* ought not, in my Opinion, to think even his Dress below his Notice : As the World is but too apt to judge by Appearances, a Man of Sense would endeavour to improve their very Follies to his own Advantage.

§ X. THERE is a certain Easiness of Temper frequently to be found in Men of extraordinary Abilities, which among *cunning Men*, and Persons of great Vivacity and little Judgment, passes for Want of Sense. Hence it is that it so often happens, that a Man of a superior *Genius*, by an unaccountable Indolence of Disposition, suffers himself to be impos'd on, tho' he has infinitely more Understanding than those who cheat him.

§ XI. ONE of the noblest and most valuable Ingredients in this Character, is that of being a *Lover of his Country*.
This

A Man of Genius.

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This is the Passion which ought to possess and inflame his Soul with the greatest Ardour. And all other Things must be accounted laudable, in Proportion to the Application and Tendency of them this Way.

§ XII. IN all the Actions of the *Heroes* of *Antiquity*, was this Virtue conspicuous: This did most powerfully animate and influence them, and gave them an Ardency to exert the rest of their good Qualities in behalf of their *native Land*. Thus did *Demosthenes* and *Cicero* turn their Eloquence, *Aristides* his Justice, *Phocion* his Intrepidity, and *Xenophon* his Wit and Valour, to the Service and Advantage of their *Country*.

§ XIII. FIR'D with this generous Motive, did *Codrus* and *Epaminondas* die with Pleasure.

IN this Cause, the Brave, *devoted Decii*, greatly fell.

EXPIRING on this Account, the Resolute *Brutus*, and the God-like *Cato*, did almost turn the most *unnatural Crime* into a *Virtue*.

§ XIV. ON this Head, would I indulge my Inclination, I should with Ease and Pleasure expatiate beyond the intended Bounds of this Discourse.

I

The Character of

*I own, the glorious Subject fires my Breast,
And my Soul's darling Passion stands confest,
Beyond or Love's or Friendship's sacred Band,
Beyond my Self I prize my native Land:
On this Foundation would I build my Fame,
And emulate the Greek and Roman Name;
Think Britain's Peace bought cheaply with my Blood,
And die with Pleasure for my Country's Good.*

§ XV. A Man discovers the Extent of his *Genius*, if, upon all Occasions, he handsomely acts his Part, and behaves with a good Grace in every Scene and Circumstance of human Life.

Omnis Aristippum decuit color & status & res.

THE Care of doing nothing unbecoming, has accompanied the greatest Minds to their last Moments: They avoided even an indecent Posture in the very Article of Death. Thus *Cæsar* gather'd his Robe about him, that he might not fall in a Manner unworthy of himself; and the greatest Concern, that appear'd in the Behaviour of *Lucretia*, when she stabb'd herself, was, that her Body should lie in an *Attitude* becoming the Mind which had inhabited it.

A Man of Genius.

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----- *Ne non procumbat honestè,
Extrema hæc etiam cura cadentis erat.*

'Twas her last Thought, how decently to fall.

§ XVI. I don't love a Man of Pleasure who is unfit for Business, and incapable of serious and solid Reflections. A Person of that Character is like one of the Brutes; nay he is much more unhappy, because, if we take Pleasure merely to consist in the mean Gratification of the sensual Appetite, the Beasts have a much livelier Taste of Eating and Drinking, and usually enjoy a much longer Course of Health, and a greater Degree of Strength and Vigour than Mankind do. Such a one, instead of improving his Mind by refin'd and elevated Thoughts, extremely debases human Nature.

THERE is no Merit in his Want of Ambition. He declines a splendid Post in the Government, only because he has not a sufficient Force of Mind to discharge and become it.

EVEN soft, witty, and amorous *Anacreon* could, for some Time, dispense with his Pleasures, and discover his Capacity and Fitness for public Employments. And *Thales* one of the *Grecian* Sages, upon his being told, that the only Reason why he studied Philosophy was, because he had not the Skill and Address to succeed in any other Design, presently fell a Merchandising, and by his Wit and Industry

The Character of

stry did thrive so admirably at it, that, in a short Time, he acquir'd a considerable Estate : After which he gravely return'd to his Books and Philosophy.

I would have a Man retire from Noise and Business by a voluntary and a happy Choice, and not by Force and Necessity ; because he is not able to endure the Uneasiness of the One, nor support the Fatigue of the Other.

§ XVII. But then, on the other Hand, I am as unsatisfy'd with the Character of these who *Think* but cannot *Act*, and are mere *Philosophers* or *Devotees*. There are many People who have a *Senseless Sort of Knowledge*, if I may so speak, and fancy they would do well enough, if they were in such and such Circumstances, and (as they fondly imagine) set in a more proper Light. And yet, if their Desires were granted, I am at a Loss to think how they would behave. Like *Sancho* in *Don Quixote*, or *Ragotin* in *Scarron*, who imagin'd they would make *fine Gentlemen*, if they were equip'd with good Horses, and handsome Armour. But we find, when they were accommodated with them, according to their Wishes, they only render'd themselves more ridiculous by their Fall.

——— *Tolluntur in altum*
Ut lapsu graviore ruant.

§ XVIII

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§ XVIII. *Eloquence* is also a great Accomplishment of a *Man of Genius*. *Os magna sonaturum*, to use *Horace's* Words, which I have chosen to be the *Motto* of this Discourse, makes up a great Deal of a *Man of Genius*, as well as of a good Poet, to which Set of Men the *Roman Bard* does indeed, in this Place, apply it.

§ XIX. AN *Orator* is as much superior to the rest of Mankind by the Force of this admirable Talent, as Man is to the Brutes, in Reason and Speech. And therefore, I have often wonder'd that, notwithstanding the many noble and useful Inventions and Discoveries of the *Moderms*, the *Art of speaking handsomely*, particularly the *Eloquence of the Bar*, which is so becoming a *Man of Genius*, instead of receiving any considerable Improvements, seems daily to decay.

§ XX. I own, there is a very great Difference between the *Eloquence* of the *ancient Orators*, and that which is proper for our *modern Advocates*; but still it must needs be allow'd, that a graceful and agreeable Way of Speaking is both a *Lawyer's* Ornament and Defence. This is what every One ought to make his principal Study, that is ambitious of behaving handsomely at the *Bar*. For my own Part, I must confess, that tho' I am sensible that smooth Expressions, without solid Learning, signify nothing to the *Judges*, and are but an empty Sound; yet true *Oratory* is

The Character of

what I am fond of to Excess; in the Pursuit of which, altho' I may come short of many in Wit and Invention, yet I have the Vanity to affirm, that if Industry can possibly attain it, I am in Hopes I shall yield to none in Pains and Application.

AND I must needs say, I am somewhat surpriz'd to see some of our young *Advocates* take so little Care about this Matter; as if at the *Bar* there were no Occasion for the agreeable Ornaments and Graces of Speech. We seem to be more ambitious of getting Employment than of really deserving it. And yet I am at a Loss to think how some of us would behave, if our Desires were granted. People may talk what they please; but notwithstanding all the Complaints of the Injustice of the Times, I am confident, I shall find it a great Deal easier, in the future Course of my Life, to gain *Clients*, than to manage their Causes to the best Advantage, when once I have got them.

§ XXI. THE true *Sublime* never swells beyond its proper Bounds, but rises with a natural Beauty, being Great without Excess, and Handsome without Affectation.

THE Comeliness of Person, and Decency of Behaviour, add infinite Weight to what is pronounc'd by any One. 'Tis the Want of this that often makes the Rebukes and Advice of old rigid Persons of no Effect, and leave a Displeasure in the Minds of those they are directed to: But Youth and Beauty, if attended with a graceful and
becom-

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becoming Severity, are of mighty Force to raise, even in the most Profligate, a Sense of Shame.

Gratior & pulchro veniens in corpore virtus.

THUS we find, in *Milton*, the Devil is never describ'd asham'd but Once, and that at the Rebuke of a beauteous Angel.

*So spoke the Cherub, and his grave Rebuke,
Severe in youthful Beauty, added Grace
Invincible: Abash'd the Devil stood,
And felt how Awful Goodness is, and saw
Virtue in her own Shape how lovely! saw, and pin'd
His Loss. -----*

IN a Word, the superior Character and *Genius* of the Speaker has, upon all Occasions, a considerable Power and Tendency to affect and persuade the Hearers. This is what the admir'd *Gratian* calls the *Ascendant*, and so very much insists on as a necessary Ingredient in his *Accomplish'd Man*. There is as great a Difference between apprehending a Thought cloath'd in the Language of a *Cicero*, a *Lockhart*, or a *Mackenzie*, and in that of an ordinary *Advocate*, as there is in discerning an Object by the Light of a Taper, or by the Light of the Sun.

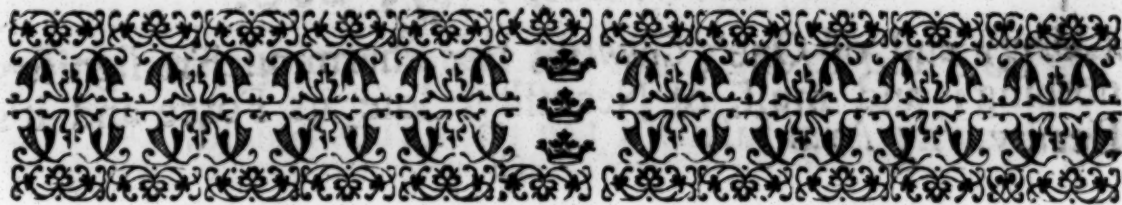
§ XXII. THE *Eloquence* of the *Ancients* was, as I hinted before, happily turn'd to the Use and Service of their native Land. And indeed without this virtuous Love of
Liberty

Liberty and of One's Country, this charming Art signifies nothing; and must, of Necessity, lose its Force and it's Beauty.

§ XXIII. I shall conclude this Discourse with an Observation, I think, naturally occurs on this Subject; That our just Admiration of these Great Men, whose Wit and *Genius* so far surpass our own, ought insensibly to carry our Thoughts to the Contemplation of the *Almighty Author of our Being*, whose Wisdom and Understanding are infinitely superior to ours, *whose Ways are not as our Ways, and whose Thoughts are not as our Thoughts.*



I believe, the following Poem, *on the Young-Company of Archers*, will be no unwelcome Present to the Reader. 'Tis written by my ingenious Friend Mr. BOYD, and is an Instance of his uncommon *Genius*, who is so far from being, as *Scaliger* says of *Claudian*, *Ignobiliore materia depressus*, that he has rais'd the most pleasing and beautiful Images from a Subject, in itself, small and inconsiderable.



A P O E M
UPON THE
Young-Company
O F
ARCHERS.

By Mr. BORD.

— *Subeunt Tægæa juvenus.* VIRG.
ΑΝΔΡΑΣΙ ΠΥΓΜΑΙΟΙΣΙ. HOM.

WHEN *Pallas* from the lab'ring Brain of Jove
Jump'd out, in full Perfection, from Above,
In shining Military Weeds array'd,
She cock't her Helmet, & her Spear display'd;
Expert in War, without the Rules of Art
And tedious Discipline, her Infant-heart

Beat

A Poem upon the

Beat bold and strong ; nor did her Sinews yield,
Her brawny Arm sustain'd the pond'rous Shield.

This Praise is to the Heroine Goddess due :
Much, *Caledonian* Youth, we owe to you.

Scarce have your tortur'd Mothers found Respite
From Throws by Day and Agonies by Night ;
Scarce the distorted Muscles yet replac'd,
Or dismal Groans, from rigid Child-bed, ceas'd,
But you turn Men, nay Warlike-men, and, more,
Grow *Quiver'd-Heroes*, as in Days of Yore,
And make those Eyes admire that wept before.

With Emulation big, each *Heroe* stalks,
And counts each Pace to Glory, as he walks :
To gazing Friends he drops his unstrung Bow
With Warlike Grace and gallant Air, to show
He bids to Ease and rusty Sloth, adieu.

Young-Company of Archers. 17

So valiant *Hector* flights his Confort's Charms,
To follow Honour, or his Fate, in Arms.

When to the Lifts the graceful Squadron came,
Their Bows, with dreadful Noise, the War Proclaim.
Th'extended Cord contracts the bending Yew,
Till the far distant *Horns* their *Moon* renew.
The long'd for Mark directs the eager Eye,
And from the twanging Strings the Weapons fly.
Envy or Love pursues each founding Dart
Gaining a Rival's Spite, or Parent's Heart.
The conqu'ring Arrow last cuts swiftly loud
The yielding Air, and dissipates the Crowd.

Now the young Troops home from the Field repair ;
One has the Trophy, all of Praise a Share.
The blooming *Victor* bears the Arrow's Prize,
But leaves behind the Conquest of his Eyes ;

A Poem upon, &c.

For tho', like *Mars*, he is for Battle dress'd,
He's found a *Cupid* in a Virgin's Breast:
And blind like him, for Multitudes were round,
He pierc'd a Heart he did not mean to wound.

Thus, our Descent we may retrace from *Jove*
By early Valour, and by Infant-Love.

Go on, brave Youth, and still those Shafts employ,
'The En'my's Terror, and the Lover's Joy.
From them the fading *Thistle* Help shall find,
'They shall, in future Days, her Foes remind,
That tho' her Ancient *Thorns*, thro' Guilt, withdrew,
Your Darts shall Arm her terribly anew.

Then, when your Joynts are firm, and Bodies sprung,
Enjoy those Captives that you made when young.

F I N I S.

